

# Fruit Leather

FNH-00228

## Flavor-Packed and Nutritious

Fruit leather is a dried-fruit treat, chewy and flavorful. When you remove water by drying the fruits, sugars, acids, fiber and many vitamins and minerals become concentrated in the remaining solid part of the fruit. This makes dried fruits high in sugar, but high in other nutrients too. Dried fruits provide a nutritious way to satisfy a sweet tooth.

## Great for Gifts!

Pick and freeze your berries when they are ripe. When Christmas rolls around, you can make a variety of fruit leathers, and put an assortment into gift boxes for those hard-to-shop-for friends.

## Lightweight for Lunches and Camping

Fruit leathers are lightweight and high in nutritional value. They store and pack easily. You may wish to make several varieties to take along on hikes, camping trips and bicycle trips for a quick snack.

## MAKING FRUIT LEATHER

### Making the Puree

*Here are some examples of how to make purees for drying fruit for leather:*

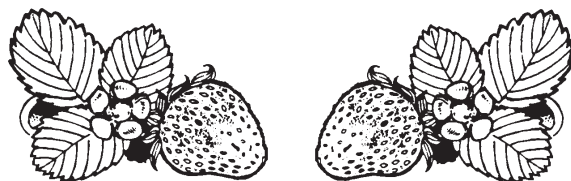
**Rose Hip Puree**—Use soft ripe rose hips (the riper they are the sweeter they are). It takes about 4 cups of rose hips to make 2 cups of puree. Remove stems and blossom ends. Rinse rose hips in cold water. Put them into a pan and add enough water to almost cover. Bring to a boil and simmer 10 to 15 minutes. Press through a sieve or strainer. All that does not go through the sieve is placed in the pan again. Add a little water, enough to almost cover; if you want a thicker puree, add slightly less. This time heat but do not boil so vigorously. This will dissolve a little more of the fruit so that it

will go through the sieve. Press again and then repeat the process one more time. By now, most of the fruit should have gone through the sieve leaving only seeds and skin.

**Rhubarb Puree**—Wash and cut into small  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch pieces about 1 quart of rhubarb. Put  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water in a saucepan and add rhubarb. Cook only until rhubarb starts to soften. Let cool slightly; put in blender and make into puree. It should make about 2 cups puree.

**Berry Puree**—To make berry purees listed in this publication, rinse berries, drain, put in a blender and blend until the consistency of thick puree. Most berries do not need to be cooked. Salmonberries and highbush

cranberries have larger seeds and should be put through a sieve to remove seeds prior to blending. Berries, such as raspberries, may be put through a fine sieve to remove some of the seeds.



## Drying Instructions

### Oven Dry

Line a cookie sheet with microwaveable plastic wrap. A 12"x17" cookie sheet holds approximately two cups of puree. Spread puree evenly about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick over the plastic, but do not push it completely to the sides. Leave a bit of plastic showing for easy removal.

Set oven at 140° F. Use an oven thermometer to test oven temperature. Too high a heat will disintegrate the plastic. Leave the oven door ajar so moisture can escape. It takes about 6 hours to dry fruit leather in the oven, but always test for dryness. Sugar holds water, and fruit with a lot of sugar, especially if sugar has been added, may take several hours longer to dry.

### Food Dehydrator

You can purchase a home model food dehydrator or you can build one. Your Cooperative Extension agent has directions for building a home drier.

Most home food dehydrators have a fan as well as a heat source to help remove moisture evenly.

Many purchased food dehydrators also have special drying trays for fruit leathers. Lightly oil these trays before spreading puree on them to prevent the fruit leather from sticking.

**Be sure the leathers are dry.** To make sure the fruit leather is completely dried, try to pull the leather from the plastic wrap or tray. If it peels from the plastic and holds its shape, it is dry. It is important that fruit be completely dry or it will mold during storage. When the fruit leather becomes too dry it will crack and crumble and won't roll, but is still edible and good to eat.

To store, roll fruit leather loosely in plastic wrap and place in a clean, dry, insect-proof container, such as a glass jar or metal can with a lid. The leather may be stored in the cupboard for 4 months to a year, (the cooler the storage area, the longer the keeping time) or in the refrigerator or freezer for more than a year.

## Fruit Leather Recipes

Be creative. Invent your own leather specialties. Combine fruit purees for different flavors; add spices or flavorings, such as cinnamon or mint; sprinkle nuts, seeds, raisins or coconut over still moist leather and then continue drying. These recipes for leathers made from Alaskan wild fruits will get you started.

### **Rose Hip-Blueberry Fruit Leather**

Combine 1 cup rose hip puree and 1 cup blueberry puree. Add honey (2 tablespoons or to taste) and spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray. Dry as for fruit leather. The dominant flavor in this fruit leather is rose hips; if you wish you may change the proportions to have more blueberry flavor.

### **Salmonberry Fruit Leather**

Combine 2 cups salmonberry puree (put through sieve to remove large seeds) and honey (2 tablespoons or to taste). Spread on micro-waveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray and dry as for fruit leather.

### **Raspberry Fruit Leather**

Combine 2 cups raspberry puree (put through fine sieve to remove some of the seeds) and honey (2 tablespoons or to taste). Spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray and dry as for fruit leather.

### **Rhubarb-Strawberry Fruit Leather**

Combine 1 cup rhubarb puree and 1 cup strawberry puree. (Strawberries can be either fresh, frozen, or frozen with sugar added.) Add honey (2 tablespoons or to taste), unless the commercially frozen strawberries already had sugar added. Spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray and dry as for fruit leather.

### **Blueberry-Applesauce Fruit Leather**

Combine 1 cup blueberry puree and 1 cup unsweetened applesauce. Add honey (2 tablespoons or to taste) and spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray. Dry as for fruit leather. This makes a tart fruit leather, so if you like it sweeter, add 1 more tablespoon honey.

### **Rose Hip Fruit Leather**

Combine 2 cups rose hip puree and 1 tablespoon lemon juice. If the rose hips were not extremely ripe, add honey (2 tablespoons or to taste). Spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray and dry as for fruit leather.

### **Rhubarb Fruit Leather**

Combine 2 cups rhubarb puree and honey (2 tablespoons or to taste). Spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray and dry as for fruit leather.

### **Rose Hip-Lowbush Cranberry Fruit Leather**

Combine 1 cup rose hip puree and 1 cup lowbush cranberry puree. Add honey (2 tablespoons or to taste) and spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray. Dry as for fruit leather. You may add ½ tablespoon lemon juice for extra flavor.



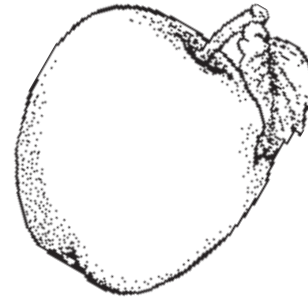
### **Rose Hip-Highbush Cranberry Fruit Leather**

Combine 1 cup rose hip puree and 1 cup highbush cranberry puree (put through sieve to remove seeds). Add honey (2 tablespoons or to taste) and spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray. Dry as for fruit leather.



### **Rose Hip-Banana-Cranberry Fruit Leather**

Combine 1 cup ripe banana puree,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup highbush cranberry puree (put through sieve to remove seeds),  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup rose hip puree, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup lowbush cranberry puree. Add honey (2 tablespoons or to taste) and 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Spread on microwaveable plastic wrap or dehydrator tray and dry as



*This publication prepared and compiled by Ellen Ayotte, Extension Home Economist, in 1976. Revised by Barbara Greene, Extension EFNEP Coordinator and Sheryl Stanek, Extension Home Economist in 1991. Revised by Extension Home Economist Roxie Dinstel in 2006.*



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